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Dear Colleague,

Tomorrow afternoon we will meet in a special Republican Conference to discuss the topic of earmarked spending and a proposal for a one-year moratorium on earmarks. Personally, I believe that it is past time for our conference to halt earmarks.

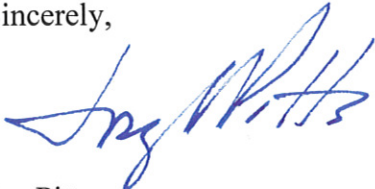
According to the Gallup organization, Congress' approval rating stands at 18 percent. We must regain the trust of the American people. Regaining that trust means taking dramatic action and calling for suspension of earmarks until we can have a fully open process in which the American people can have full faith and confidence.

Appropriations Chairman David Obey has already taken limited action to prevent earmarks to private, for-profit entities. I don't believe that this goes far enough. Only a small percentage of earmarks would be affected.

Earmarks are a symbol of what's wrong with Washington. They are a symbol of out of control spending. They are a symbol of back room deals and of corruption. Many, if not most, earmarks fund good and necessary things, but the process is severely flawed and prone to abuse. Congress should never cede its Constitutionally-mandated power of the purse. But that power should be exercised openly and democratically to ensure that every dime we spend can withstand the light of day.

I hope you will join me tomorrow in voting for a one-year moratorium on earmarks and work with me to enact a comprehensive restructuring of the way this institution spends money.

Sincerely,



Joe Pitts
Member of Congress